

# In The News



The mission of *Keep a Child Alive* touched the hearts of New School Prep's Grade 2 children. Their student bake sale to help the children raised \$427.00 in one day.

## *from the Director*

We are proud to have talented high quality teachers who are partners in the New School Preparatory family. Daily we read about poor teaching quality, low scoring schools and unmotivated students who are seen in the educational system. Indeed, teachers are vital to the level of achievement in all areas of education.

How can parents help create achieving children? I am always asked, "What is *my* role in educating my child?" After all, we do ask parents not to correct student homework, to leave that to the teachers. As parents, your role is crucial, your involvement essential in your child's education.

"What are you studying?" "Why do you think the topic is important?" "Let's talk about those ideas at dinner." Add this to questions about how school was today, and you will be much more involved in what your child is learning. To increase your knowledge of the New School Preparatory curriculum, we have added a link to our curriculum section called: *Websites For New School Preparatory Curriculum*.

Daniel Akst explored the integral role of parental involvement in his article *Raising the Bar: How Parents Can Fix Education*. He notes the importance of parental expectations, of insistence that their children work to their fullest potential. To read the entire article: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121996426389881371.html>.

*Morrie Sorin*

## *Dates to Remember*

### **October 4 (Saturday)**

School Picnic

Maitland Community Park

1:00pm-4:00pm

### **October 9 (Thursday)**

Teacher Work Day

Non-Student Day

### **October 29-31 (Wed-Fri)**

Pathfinder Outdoor Education

Grades 6-8

### **November 14 (Friday)**

Parent Conferences

Non-Student Day

### **November 26-28 (Wed-Fri)**

Thanksgiving Holiday

School Closed

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

Saturday, October 4, 2008

1:00-4:00 P.M.

School Picnic  
Maitland Community Park

## KINDERGARTEN

The **Kindergarten** is deeply involved in their study of the human body. They are learning that their body is made of many parts, each part having a job to do to keep them alive and functioning. Each child is working on a book that describes the job of body part. They have written about skin, muscles, joints, and bones. They have made entries describing the role of the heart, lungs and brain and the bones that protect them. The children can't wait to bring the books home to share with their parents.

The children traced and cut out the shape of their bodies. As they learn about another body part, they color, cut and glue it onto the body. The room is full of rainbow bones and organs!!

During lunch, I have begun playing a collection of opera arias for children. The whole class is eager to hear the music and they remind me if I forget to put it on. The arias are done in English and the children especially love "Figaro" from *The Barber of Seville*, "The March of the Toreadors" from *Carmen* some selections from *La Boheme* and *Madame Butterfly*. They are disappointed when lunch is over and we have to turn off the music and get ready for recess!

The students are participating in a drive to provide books to children in the United States who attend schools that are ill-equipped. The children are participating by recording the titles of books they read or that their parents read to them. They bring the titles in every morning and fill in spaces on a 100 book chart. When the chart is full at 100 books, we will send the chart in to Scholastic Books and 100 books will be sent to a school on an Indian Reservation in Wyoming. The children come in each morning with their lists and eagerly fill in the spaces on the chart.

The children have completed a mini unit on apples. This unit has multiple concepts including the scientific procedure of observation, using descriptive words (adjectives) and graphing. A different kind of apple was placed on each table. On paper that had been folded into four sections, the children carefully observed each apple and drew it. They were surprised that a red apple is not all red. It had purplish spots and speckles. After drawing the apples, we tasted them and came up with words to describe the tastes and textures; "crunchy", "sweet", "juicy" and "sour" were

some of the words the children chose. The last activity was to create a class book entitled "Apples Can Be . . .".

Next major unit will be work with Nutrition. The children have learned a great deal about their bodies, and the next logical stop is what needs to be done to maintain the health of their body. The children will learn the food groups and the Food Pyramid. We will categorize the foods they have in their lunch and create graphs that reflect what food groups they have in their breakfast and their lunch. The unit will culminate with a "Healthy Food Luncheon". The children will create a menu including food from every food group and will bring items from home. We will have a "buffet lunch" and the children will make their selections from the menu they created.




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## FIRST GRADE

Children who have learned to read a passage expressively also come to better understand its meaning. The critical part of reading involves comprehension of the written word. With that goal in mind, all learners- competent readers and beginners-are involved in Reader's Theater. This medium helps the reader become more fluent and able to read with expression. It makes the reading fun and allows the students to demonstrate skills that are crucial to their understanding of the story. Beginners are motivated by the more advanced readers. They all read and re-read the same passages. Gradually, adding more expression, and reading more fluently, all students find subtle meanings in the passages while enjoying an environment that is fun for everyone involved.

In Social Studies the students are becoming experts at finding places on the map of the United States as well as the world! This will become an integral part of Current Events. We are now ready to begin learning about other people and events around the world. Critical thinking and problem solving will be an essential part of our discussions as we begin to understand how events around the world have an impact on others. We will begin to see how people are faced with problems and how they solve them or why they can't solve them. We will develop our language expression as we must be very clear in explaining these events. It is very important to separate facts from opinions. Taking an active role may be necessary as we decide to make positive contributions to an event to improve the human condition. Thanks to the second graders for being, not only our role models for current events, but our inspiration when they took an active role in helping a charitable organization keep African children alive.

Pumpkins and spiders will be the topic for Math and Science in October! In Math, pumpkins will make it meaningful and fun as we learn to compare, communicate, graph, estimate, weigh, measure and count. In Science they will introduce us to the "scientific method" by learning to use our skills of observation, making predictions (hypothesizing), experimenting and reaching conclusions after analyzing our data. Spiders will also become a meaningful way to reinforce some of the same skills while we become experts. Don't worry!!!! The spiders will not be going home.

## SECOND GRADE

**Second Grade** has been studying our roles in the community. We have studied the different jobs that adults have in the community understands that most people work in jobs in which they produce a few special goods or services. Students have looked at their own roles as consumers and producers. In the next few weeks we will be focusing on our government. I want the students to understand the structure and function of the government as well as their roles as responsible citizens in relation to the government.

**Second Grade** is continuing to work on understanding place value. One of the hardest concepts with place value is that zero is a place holder when there aren't any ones or tens. We will also begin simple two-digit addition problems in class. Once we have a firm understanding of adding two-digit numbers we will move on to carrying from the ones place to the tens place in addition. This can be a hard concept to grasp. Please make sure you are reviewing math facts with your child every night to make this a little easier on them.

**Second Grade** finished reading *The Tale of Despereaux*. This story focused on the concepts of standing up for yourself and doing what you know is right even when others don't want you to. We looked at ways we could "do the right thing" in our families and communities. We were able to put this into action through one of our current events. The students learned about the problems people were facing in Africa

when they were trying to get their medication. When the students found this unfair I asked them what they could do to help. They chose to have a bake sale and we raised \$427 for the charity Keep a Child Alive. The students learned that when you see something that needs to be done, you are able to do this on your own. You do not need to wait for someone else to take action first.



## THIRD and FOURTH GRADE MATH and SCIENCE

**Third Graders** have begun an in-depth study of water quality and how it affects crops. In one experiment we are testing the effects of "fish" water (water gleaned from the classroom aquarium to mimic the seasonal flooding of the Nile) on basil plants. We have set up a control group as well, which only receives tap water. We make observations every few days and monitor the growth rates. In another, we are seeing the efficacy of hydroponics using the same types of plants. In the end, we will measure and graph the results of our testing and come to a conclusion. As part of our explorations, we tested the tap water and "fish" water for the following: the presence of nitrates, pH, dissolved oxygen content, biochemical oxygen demand, the presence of coliform bacteria (the tap water was negative, fortunately!), and the presence of phosphates. It was this last one that surprised us. We hypothesized that the tap water would have 0 ppm (parts per million), yet it tested 2ppm! Well, I can tell you, that finding set off a line of inquiry from which

we learned that phosphates don't really have too much of an effect on humans, but it does cause an explosion of plant growth (algae), which in turn effects the aquatic life of our lakes and streams.

In addition, **Third Grade** has begun to study mummification. We discussed the difference between natural and created mummies and then turned our attention to the actual practice of mummification. We performed a ceremony in the classroom in which we cleansed, purified, and then mummified fruits and vegetables using natron (a mixture of salt and baking soda which mimics the natural compounds used by the ancient Egyptians.) Now we must wait until the natron does its job before we can continue our mummies. In the meantime we are making beautiful works of art for the sarcophagi.

**Fourth Grade** young scholars are studying medieval technology and then recreating it as best we can. This past week the children had the choice of working alone or in groups to produce a working model of a water mill. They were given examples of how the technology works and a rubric outlining the expectations. Their finished

mills had to move under the force of water alone, crush a corn chip, (which is a lot easier than grinding it into actual corn meal), use simple machines in their designs, and explain how it works to the class. Let me tell you, the young engineers did a wonderful job and gained much from the experience. Each group went through design malfunctions and had to be rebuilt at least twice, but in doing this, the children were problem solving and experimenting with different ideas with varying degrees of success. In the end, every single model worked like a dream!

In the coming weeks, we will explore ancient technology in the form of catapults and trebuchets (complete with a marshmallow war!), medical advances, and we'll also explore the great Archimedes and attempt to recreate his burning mirrors and "ship shaker" war defense mechanisms. It is my intention that the children will come to have an appreciation for the ancients and their contributions to our modern sciences. Science is all about building on the discoveries of others!

### THIRD and FOURTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES and LANGUAGE ARTS

Medieval history opens the imagination as students study a world that is so different than their own. At the same time, they draw parallels to the world of today (sayings that have come down through the ages) as well as to other ancient civilizations (Ancient Japanese feudal system). Students are being taught to view the “characters” of the Middle Ages as both fascinatingly diverse and different than themselves as well as a major formative influence on society today.

Both Social Studies and Language Arts are part of this journey. Students in **4th Grade** are becoming enthusiastic medievalists and will continue their study of the Middle Ages in Social Studies by concentrating on the social and economic significance of the manor, the castle, and the medieval town. In Language Arts, they are discovering the rich Medieval heritage of our English language through sayings and proverbs. Students are also continuing their grammar review by concentrating on verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

**Third Graders** have begun their examination of ancient Egyptian history by focusing on the importance of the Nile River. Students are seeing an emerging pattern in civilization building, and are wondering if the next civilization they study will also feature a river. One main concept in the study of ancient Egypt is their belief in an afterlife and how ancient Egyptians fashioned their religion and daily lives around preparing for it. Another is the importance of the Pharaoh to Egyptian religion and society. Students will examine the lives of several prominent historical figures including Cleopatra – which sets the stage for the study of Ancient Rome later in the year.

In Language Arts students are reading Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* in class and are enjoying applying the Master Words of the Law of the Jungle to their own lives. Students are also reviewing subject-verb agreement, general verb usage, and sharpening their inferencing skills using targeted activities as well as their reading in *The Jungle Book*.



### Noticias en Español

#### Kindergarten

The kids love learning songs to practice the vocabulary learned in class. In this month, we will spend most of the time learning and practicing body words, such as *cabeza* (head), *ojos* (eyes), *boca* (mouth), etc. They will also learn the shapes: *circulo* (circle), *rectangulo* (rectangle), and *cuadrado* (square). They will make books related with this topic.

#### First and Second Grade

Students will work on objects used in class, such as *lápiz* (pencil), *lapicero* (pen), *cuaderno* (notebook), etc. We will continue working with the mini-booklets related with current topics according with each grade level. We will also work with basic verbs commonly used in greeting.

#### 3rd Grade

Students will start working on a new vocabulary related with diverse school activities, such scheduling, classes, working material, etc. The students will learn how to use the expressions *hay* (there is/are), *tengo* (I have), and *me gusta* (I like). Additionally, they will be introduced to the concept of gender and number of nouns and adjectives.

#### 4th Grade

The class will work on expression related to the whether and time; they will practice the concept of gender and number of nouns and adjectives. We will continue working on reading comprehension using a packet entitled “*Una Visita a Venezuela*” (A visit to Venezuela).

#### 5th Grade

In Spanish the verb to be has two different forms, *ser* and *estar*; this month we dedicate our work on these differences and how to use them. We will also work on forming question and the structure of interrogative words, such as *que* (what), *donde* (where), *quien* (who), *cual* (which), etc.

#### 6th Grade

Students will continue working on the gender of the adjective: masculine and feminine. They will learn how to describe themselves and tell about some of their like and dislikes. They will also learn about teen activities and the concept of friendship in Spanish-speaking countries.

#### 7th Grade

Students will start working with demonstrative adjective to point out people and things, as well as direct object pronouns (*lo, la, los, las*) to replace nouns; we will dedicate several classes on this concept of direct object pronoun, since it takes time to conceptualize the idea. We will discuss where people shop for clothes in Spanish-speaking countries and in the United States.

#### 8th Grade

Students have been working with verbs in present tense. Spanish has two ways to express past tense, preterite and imperfect tenses. We will start working on the preterite tense starting with the conjugation of regular verbs ended in -ar, such as *hablar* (talk), *caminar* (walk), *cantar* (sing). We will also work on the preterite *ir* (to go). The students will be asked to compare and contrast a Hispanic community with a community they are familiar with.

## Language Arts Grades 5 and 6

The study of Greek Mythology in both grades continues. The Titans have been followed by the Olympians, and each of the latter gods have been assigned to their positions on Mt. Olympus. Grade 5 follows with suspense the children of Zeus. Grade 6 is fascinated with and in depth study of the monsters of mythology. While the students are learning the classic Greek myths, they are also learning the origin of words and phrases that we use today that come from Greek mythology. Titanic, Pandora's Box, chronological (Cronus), ambrosia (the fruit/drink of the gods) originate from the myths. Both classes are learning the Roman names for the gods who are often alluded to in literature by their Roman not Greek names. To refresh your memory about the gods, try this list at:

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/troy/2774/mythgods.html>

Students in both grades will take part in a classic competition piece from Odyssey of the Mind called Ye' Gods. Teams will have to present an advertising campaign that allows the audience to understand the story of one or more mythological characters. Strict limitations pose challenges to this problem. For more information go to:

[http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/learn\\_more.php](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/learn_more.php)

What are the qualities of good leadership? As we begin to involve students in the debates surrounding our Presidential Election, this question is critical. Two novels that we are

reading address this concept, *The Girl Who Owned a City* (Grade 5) and *The Westing Game* (Grade 6).

Study skills have dominated the Language Arts classes these beginning weeks of school. Emphasis has been on how to study for a test, the role of self-made flash cards, how to become independent learners, how and when to take notes. As students gain these skills in language arts, they can transfer what they have learned to their other courses.



## Social Studies Grade 6 and 7

**Sixth Grade** constructed a timeline of the history of the world this week. Given the estimated 4.6 billion years of Earth's history, our timeline was a gargantuan 383 feet long at a scale of one inch equals 1,000,000 years! We progressed through nearly 9/10ths of our timeline before the first sophisticated life forms appeared. Dinosaurs were added to the timeline about 20 feet from the end. The earliest relatives of man came 3.5 inches from the end of the timeline, and the entire history of civilization occupied the last 1/100<sup>th</sup> of an inch. It was an eye-opening experience to learn just how brief our history is from a broad perspective.

This week we'll begin studying hunter/gatherer cultures. Students will assume the role of hunter/gatherers themselves and struggle with the issues of resource allocation, environmental degradation and inter-tribal conflict.

**Seventh Grade** will be holding a mock trial. The defendant—Socrates.

Can 7<sup>th</sup> graders making impassioned speeches in the roles of Plato, Chaerophon, and Socrates himself save this great philosopher from the forces that would brand him a threat to society, an atheist and a corruptor of youth? We'll read and discuss Plato's dialogues concerning this trial as we progress toward a verdict.

## Language Arts Grade 7 and Grade 8

**Seventh Grade** students are preparing to write their first essays by studying inspiration and idea generation. What is inspiration? Can you control it? Can you train yourself to get inspiration when you need it? We've learned methods of idea generation like brainstorming, concept maps, concept fans, reversal and questioning.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade** has held two debates. We argued over whether child labor laws should be relaxed and whether chat-speak, that abbreviated dialect that has permeated the internet, is an inevitable evolution in our language. Both sides spoke convincingly on these issues, and

we're working hard on being not only thoughtful speakers but passionate and convincing orators. In case you're wondering, our judges favored the arguments against chat-speak and in favor of maintaining strict child labor laws.

## CHESS CLASSES and CLUBS

Paul Hargett our local master chess teacher has returned to New School. This year his role has expanded to teaching 2 groups of students during the week, one **Kindergarten to Grade 4**, the other **Grades 5-8**. We will also be opening our after school chess club on Thursdays after school.



## MATHEMATICS

**Eighth Grade** Algebra I students are working on solving complex word problems dealing with Geometry, ratio and proportion, mixtures, interest, percent and money.

**Seventh Graders** have finished reviewing and have begun Pre-Algebra. Their favorite phrase this week is "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally". Do you remember what that stands for? **Sixth Graders** are busy learning about fractions and decimals. **Fifth Graders** are working individually on everything from multiplication of whole numbers to addition of fractions with unlike denominators. Please keep working on math facts. Knowing the facts makes all other math concepts much easier.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### Grade 5 and Grade 8

**5th Grade** Social Studies students continue examining the motives driving different European powers in their race to colonize the New World. We will begin discussing the upcoming election and important issues. We will learn the basic function of our government and the importance of the election process.

**8th Grade** Social Studies will turn to the presidential election and how our government functions. We will study the history of suffrage in our country, the branches of government, different types of governments, and of course the candidates and issues.

## COMPUTERS

Computer classes for **Grades K-1** continue drawing shapes and letters on a paint program to reinforce these concepts. Students will continue to play educational games online that reinforce math skills, as well as, language, and art skills.

Students in **Second and Third Grades** have practiced copying images from the Internet and pasting to a word processing file.

**Fourth through Eighth Grades** have been working on slide show presentations.

## MUSIC

New School Preparatory has been invited to perform Oct. 2, 2008 for a banquet honoring the volunteers who assist with the "Meals on Wheels" program. Seniors First will be hosting the program, "Volunteers Plant the Seeds of Kindness" and New School Preparatory students will be the featured entertainment. Selected students from **Grades 5-8** will be asked to be a part of this program which will feature several songs. Repertoire will include, "Star Spangled Banner", "Rhythm of Life", "There is a Season", and "God Bless the U.S.A.". All students in **Grades 5-8** will be involved with learning the music during our regular music classes.

## PATHFINDERS

The excitement level is rising as the middle school students look forward to October 29 when they leave for Pathfinders. Pathfinders is outdoor education aimed at challenging the students to think "outside the box" as they learn new skills, develop new friendships and experience new situations. Look for the snack sign-up sheet to come home on October 8 and the packing list on October 22. Please bring your snacks to school on Monday, October 27 or Tuesday, October 28, so they can get packed for travel. E-mail the school if you have any additional questions.

## COACH'S CORNER

### Physical Education

Students have been participating in a variety of activities since the start of school. Students started with team building games and have moved on to games to improve our skills in sports and ball handling.

Volleyball has been a favorite with **Grades 3-8**.

**K-2** have begun playing games which introduce rolling, kicking throwing & catching balls of all sizes.

### Athletics & Activities

Fall Season started with a successful Crazy Hair Day and Pep Rally! This year we have introduced a Co-ed Soccer Team led by Coach Jason Angle and two new volleyball teams. All of our athletes have shown great commitment and enthusiasm. The volleyball teams have dominated the courts with many victories, which include individual achievements as well as outscoring the opponents. Congratulations to all of our Athletes!

Come out and support our teams during their end of the season tournaments. Check our Web Page for dates and times.

We are looking forward to a successful Winter Girl's Basketball program, coached by our own Kevin Reilly. Good luck Lady Knights.

